

**Strategy #6 :**

**Expand access to early childhood courses through an educational fund for high school graduates, GED holders and individuals who are not already working in the field of Early Education and Care but seek to attain basic higher education to enter the child care workforce skilled and prepared.**

The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council Needs and Assets assessment revealed that the Santa Cruz Region lacks a skilled and well prepared early education and care workforce. Most employees entering the workforce meet only minimum requirements to work in a child care setting: a high school diploma or GED. The implications of this fact caused the Regional Partnership Council to develop a “grow your own” strategy to assist the region in moving toward the creation of a skilled, prepared, and more highly qualified child care workforce who would eventually work in Quality First! centers and may choose to go to college with a TEACH scholarship. This strategy builds and expands on what the local community colleges are already doing to help adults seeking to enter the field or those wishing to obtain a certificate in early childhood development and education by providing an educational fund for potential students to use for tuition and books. Current courses offered are limited and are sometimes cancelled if there are not enough students. One of the obstacles that students report experiencing is inability to pay tuition and the high cost of materials.

As part of their coursework, this strategy will encourage students to observe and carry out at least a one unpaid semester internship in either a Quality First! or accredited child care setting. The observations and internships benefit the student with the necessary practice needed to enter the workforce above the minimum level required by child care licensing requirements. It affords them the experience of moving beyond minimums to higher quality experiences with children and to becoming a professional educator. Upon graduation, students will provide a one year service commitment to a Santa Cruz County early childhood education program. Every year funding is accessed equals one year of service. Ultimately, this instruction and practice benefits not only the children in their care, but the level of quality in the early childhood setting where they work. It also responds to the need for the creation of a skilled and well-prepared workforce in the Santa Cruz region.

Additionally, the Santa Cruz Regional Council intends to collaborate with existing local entities who are recruiting and professional development opportunities such as the 60 hour introductory training for those entering the child care profession, assistance with college coursework that leads to a Child Development Associate Credential and statewide infant/toddler training. These are often provided by local community colleges for credit or the Department of Economic Security and other non-profit social service agencies. The Regional office and local community partners will work together to solicit participants by disseminating printed materials to notify individuals of the opportunity, attending

regional meetings to announce the openings and through the use of public announcements and earned media.			
<b>Lead Goal: FTF will build a skilled and well prepared childhood development workforce.</b>			
<b>Key Measures:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Total number and percentage of professionals working in early childhood development who are pursuing a credential, certificate or degree</li> </ol>			
<b>Target Population: This strategy proposes to reach individuals in Santa Cruz County who have a High School diploma or GED and are interested in entering the Early Childhood workforce through higher education..</b>			
<b>Proposed Service Numbers</b>	<b>SFY2010 July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010</b>	<b>SFY2011 July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011</b>	<b>SFY2012 July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012</b>
	25 students	25 students	25 students
<b>Performance Measures SFY 2010-2012:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. # of students graduating with a Child Development Certificate /25 proposed service numbers</li> </ol>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is this strategy building on the service network that currently exists?</li> </ul> <p>This strategy capitalizes on the existence of a local community college system that offers several courses in early childhood development and provides a certificate in early childhood education and a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. The Regional Partnership Council is building on the infrastructure elements established by FTF Board with Quality First! and TEACH to improve the quality of early care and education in the Santa Cruz Region.</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the opportunities for collaboration and alignment?</li> </ul> <p>There is a possibility to collaborate and encourage additional Child Care Professional Training with the regional DES office. There are also opportunities to partner with local higher education institutions such as Cochise Community College Nogales Center. School Districts, Head Start, Family Child Care, Child Care Centers and Nursery Schools will be major partners in placing students in the workforce upon graduation. The TEACH Early Childhood Arizona program will provide model for agreements with local colleges providing ECE and CDA certification programs.</p>			
<b>SFY2010 Expenditure Plan for Proposed Strategy</b>			
Population-based Allocation for proposed strategy	\$ 46,200		

**Budget Justification:**

The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council will offer the tuition scholarships to 25 new early childhood education students. Local branches of community colleges provided the tuition numbers per semester per student as follows:

\$1400 per 3 “semesters” fall, spring, summer for 25 students = \$35,000

Books, Materials, and Cost of Field Trips to local child care centers= \$6,000

Outreach materials: \$1,000

Total scholarship fund: \$42,000

Administrative costs = \$4,200